

In the claims:

1. (Previously Pending) An activity-level indicator comprising:
a controller operable to receive an activity level of a port from a processor
associated with the port and to generate a signal that is related to the activity level;
and
an indicator device coupled to the controller and operable to indicate the
activity level in response to the signal.
2. (Previously Pending) The activity-level indicator of claim 1, wherein
there is a finite number of activity levels.
3. (Previously Pending) The activity-level indicator of claim 1, wherein the
indicator device indicates activity by flashes.
4. (Previously Pending) The activity-level indicator of claim 1, wherein the
indicator device is a light emitting diode.
5. (Previously Pending) An activity-level indicator comprising:
a controller operable to receive an activity level of a port from a processor
associated with the port and to generate a signal that is related to the activity level,
the signal comprising a series of separated pulses, the separation between pulses
being a non-linear function of the activity level; and
an indicator device coupled to the controller and operable to indicate the activity

level in response to the signal.

6. (Previously Pending) The activity-level indicator of claim 5, wherein there is a finite number of activity levels.

7. (Previously Pending) The activity-level indicator of claim 5, wherein the indicator device indicates activity by flashes.

8. (Previously Pending) The activity-level indicator of claim 5, wherein the indicator device is a light emitting diode.

9. (Previously Pending) An activity-level indicator comprising:
a controller operable to receive an activity level of a port from a processor associated with the port, and to generate a signal that is related to the activity level, the signal comprising a series of separated pulses, the length of a separation being randomized within a predetermined range for that activity level; and
an indicator device coupled to the controller and operable to indicate the activity level in response to the signal.

10. (Previously Pending) The activity-level indicator of claim 9, wherein the controller is further operable to generate a randomized number, and the separation is a function of the activity level and the randomized number generated for that separation.

11. (Previously Pending) The activity-level indicator of claim 9, wherein there is a finite number of activity levels.

12. (Previously Pending) The activity-level indicator of claim 9, wherein the indicator device indicates activity by flashes.

13. (Previously Pending) The activity-level indicator of claim 9, wherein the indicator device is a light emitting diode.

14. (Previously Pending) A system for indicating the activity level of a port, comprising:

a processor operable to receive port activity information and determine a port activity level;

a controller operable to receive the port activity level, and to generate a signal that is related to the activity level; and

an indicator device coupled to the controller and operable to indicate the activity level in response to the signal.

15. (Previously Pending) A system for indicating the activity level of a port, comprising:

a processor operable to receive port activity information, and determine a port activity level;

a controller operable to receive the port activity level and to generate a signal that is related to the activity level, the signal comprising a series of separated pulses, the separation between pulses being a non-linear function of the activity level; and

an indicator device coupled to the controller and operable to indicate the activity level in response to the signal.

16. (Previously Pending) A system for indicating the activity level of a port to a user, comprising:

a processor operable to receive port activity information, and determine a port activity level;

a controller operable to receive an activity level of a port, to generate a randomized number, and to generate a signal that is related to the activity level, the signal comprising a series of separated pulses, the length of a separation being randomized within a predetermined range for that activity level; and

an indicator device coupled to the controller and operable to indicate the activity level in response to the signal.

17. (Previously Pending) A method of representing the activity level of a port, comprising the steps of:

receiving port activity information with a processor;

determining a port activity level with a processor;

generating a signal related to the port activity level with a controller that is separate from the processor; and

indicating the activity level with an indicator device coupled to the controller and driven by the signal.

18. (Previously Pending) The method of claim 17, wherein the same processor receives the port activity information and determines the port activity level.

19. (Previously Pending) The method of claim 17, further comprising determining the port activity level as a non-linear function of the port activity.

20. (Previously Pending) A method of representing the activity level of a port, comprising the steps of:

receiving port activity information with a processor;

determining a port activity level with a processor;

generating a signal related to the port activity level with a controller that is separate from the processor, the signal comprising a series of separated pulses, the separation between pulses being a non-linear function of the activity level; and

indicating the activity level with an indicator device coupled to the controller and driven by the signal.

21. (Previously Pending) The method of claim 20, wherein the same processor receives the port activity information and determines the port activity level.

22. (Previously Pending) A method of representing the activity level of a port, comprising the steps of:

receiving port activity information with a processor;

determining a port activity level with a processor;

generating a signal related to the port activity level with a controller that is separate from the processor, the signal comprising a series of separated pulses, the length of a separation being randomized within a predetermined range for that activity level; and